

Disability Culture at the Ryerson-RBC Institute for Disability Studies

For generations, disability has been held hostage in art and literature as a metaphor for tragedy, villainy, nonsense and monstrosity.

The Ryerson-RBC Institute for Disability Studies positions disabled people *in command* of cultural media, as emancipatory actors who know best where to point the lens and when to click the shutter. We seek to showcase creative work boldly grounded in the experience of Disability and Deaf identity. In a culture that represents disabled people as incomplete and diminished, we make way for a radical new lexicon of image, gesture and language. We incubate art and performance that is authentic and audacious, unbound from propriety or convention – work that stretches the boundaries of existing forms; work that speaks back to power; work that reinvents and celebrates Disability and Deaf Identity.

In April, 2004, the Institute published a major research report entitled “*Lights... Camera... Attitude! Introducing Disability Arts and Culture*”. This report addresses the definition and scope of cultural activity by disabled artists, scholars and activists through a range of media (print, video/film, performance and other) in North America and internationally. Drawing on contemporary and historical works, active as well as documented sources, it creates a synthesis that – to our knowledge – does not currently exist elsewhere. It makes explicit the implications of cultural activities for different sectors of life in Ontario but also for the global movement of disabled people towards full inclusion.

To obtain a copy of this report, please contact Kathryn Church, Research Associate and Adjunct Professor, Ryerson University School of Disability Studies at k3church@ryerson.ca.

For more information about artists who have appeared onstage in Institute productions, and to view video recordings of past performances of ART WITH ATTITUDE, visit our web site at

www.ryerson.ca/ds/RBCCulture.htm